



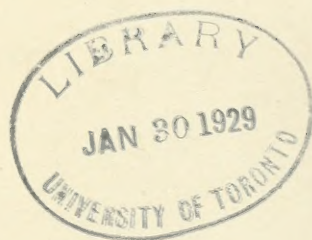
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*Tulane University of Louisiana. Dept
of Middle American Research*

(Department of

Middle American Research

of



The Tulane University of Louisiana)

... Its Activities and Its Aims

September, 1928

New Orleans

HISTORICAL SKETCH

Because of its geographical situation, New Orleans is the logical location for a base for studying the countries immediately to the south of it,—these countries so rich in historical background and with so many undeveloped potentialities that their future development promises to be one of the most interesting stories of the coming years.

To the coördination of four fortunate circumstances: the broad vision of a man who foresaw the need for and possibilities of such a department of research; the existence in this city of such an excellent educational institution as Tulane University; the fact that a rare collection of material on Mexico and Central America was about to be offered for sale; and the generosity of a man interested both in the University and in the field to be studied, the Department of Middle American Research owes its existence.

The Department was founded in 1924 for the purpose of advanced research into the history, archaeology, botany, natural resources and products of Mexico, the Central American countries and the West Indies. Its work was planned with the definite aim of gathering and disseminating information in regard to so-called Spanish America and, through fuller knowledge of and closer contact with these peoples, helping to maintain friendly relations between our country and our southern neighbors.

The Department has been developed along four distinct but closely related lines, namely, the library, research work, expeditions and collections.

Its idea of service has been carried out to some extent through personal contact, correspondence and printed publications, in this way making known the result of some of its investigations, imparting to prospective visitors to Mexico and Central America information in regard to the countries they are about to visit; supplying business men with helpful economic information and furnishing Mexican and Central American citizens with knowledge which they sought from time to time. Opportunities for service of this sort will grow as the funds of the Department increase and its Library is able to supply the latest information obtainable.

The "Index of Ruined Cities" compiled by Mr. Blom has proved of great assistance to explorers and archaeologists and has received their

heartiest support. An effort is made to keep in this card file a record of all archaeological discoveries that have been made in the field, the date of the discovery and the name of the person making it. This record not only saves the time of investigators by making available in compact form information as to location and extent of previously known ruins, but also, by promptly recording new finds, insures due credit for priority in discovery when more than one investigator chances upon the same ruin about which nothing has previously appeared in print. As published reports of expeditions are often delayed in appearance, important information sometimes fails to reach interested persons. Scientists, realizing this, often make it a point to consult this index before entering the field in order to make sure that they will not duplicate work recently done.

Public interest in the Department has been clearly indicated by the generous space allotted by local and national newspapers to information supplied by the Department in regard to its Expeditions and general growth. Not only have friends made generous individual gifts of books and museum pieces and loaned whole exhibits in particular fields, but through the formation of the Exploration Society, they have united to give financial support for the purpose of sending expeditions into the field.

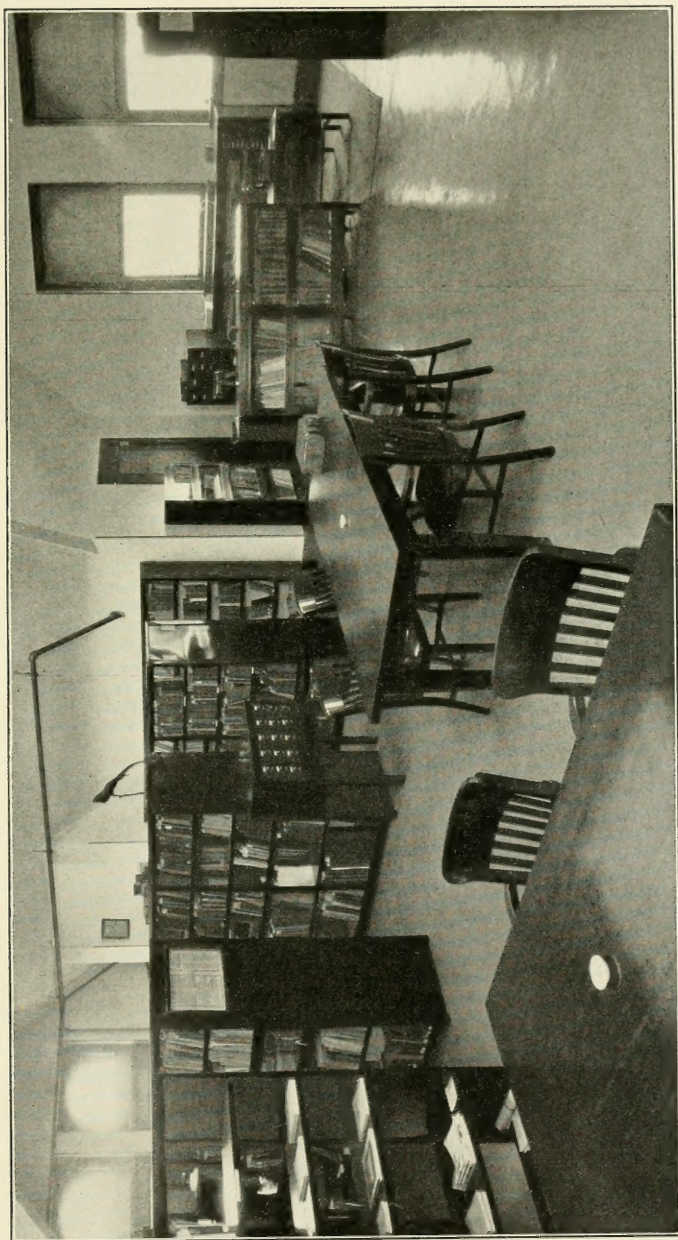
Miss Matilda Gray, and Messrs. Henry and William Gray, of Lake Charles, Louisiana, as a tribute to their father, made possible the John Geddings Gray Memorial Expedition, which spent eight months of 1928 in the land of the Mayas, making studies which will throw further light upon the history of this interesting people.

The completion of the extension of the New Science Building in the spring of 1928, almost doubled the quarters of the Department. This addition not only permitted the exhibits of the collections to be displayed to better advantage but also provided the Library with more adequate stack space and an attractive reading room.

LIBRARY

The foundation of all research is a first rate working library.

The William E. Gates collection of manuscripts, books, pamphlets and maps furnished a good starting point for such a Library. It contains many rarities in the way of original documents, valuable books on the discovery and early history of Spanish America and an unusually rich section on linguistics, including texts in and commentaries on many Indian dialects about which very little is known. Several



The Library.
Department of Middle American Research, Tulane University of Louisiana.

hundred photographic copies of important books, of which, in some cases, only one or two copies are known to exist, made available works otherwise impossible of access except to those going abroad or traveling great distances across the country for the purpose.

To this library noteworthy additions have been made from time to time. The "Pepper Collection," material gathered by George H. Pepper, of New York, furnished comprehensive information on the Indians of the United States, especially those of the Southwest.

The acquisition of the library of Rudolf Schuller added valuable books and pamphlets on American Indian languages, treatises on the discovery of America and an interesting series of very old maps.

The Mackie collection, containing nearly three thousand volumes on Middle America and the West Indies, admirably supplemented the above mentioned collections dealing with special fields, by adding works of general information and welding all into a well-balanced whole.

Current purchases and gifts are constantly enhancing the value of the library, which now ranks among the leading research libraries of the country. The purchase of a number of sixteenth century documents in the Maya language made the collection in this field the richest in the world, for the library now probably possesses as many Maya manuscripts as all other similar collections put together.

Mention might be made of a few other outstanding features. As the Department is stressing the study of Maya hieroglyphs, it is natural that this subject should be well represented, and it may be truthfully said that the library possesses practically every published treatise on the Maya hieroglyphs. It is also rich in reproductions and interpretations of the Mexican codices. The Maya field is covered by works of all the leading authorities, in addition to original post-Hispanic Maya manuscripts, of interest both as historical documents and as aids in studying the language. The exceedingly valuable collection of original manuscripts, early printed books and later commentaries on Indian linguistics offers a rare opportunity to the student of Indian languages. There are texts in over thirty-nine dialects in the Mexican and Central American area alone. The languages of the North American and South American Indians are also well represented.

To the student of early American history the library offers exceptional opportunities of investigation through its wealth of source material, including the "Colección de Documentos Inéditos Relativos al Descubrimiento, Conquista y Organizacion de las Antiguas Posesiones



The Great Tropical Forest.
First Tulane University Expedition.

Españolas de America y Oceania", gathered from the Spanish Archives and published in Spain; the "Colección de Libros y Documentos Referentes a la Historia de America", also published in Spain, and the "Documentos Inéditos o Muy Raros Para la Historia de Mexico", published by Genaro García, in Mexico; while students of modern Mexican history will find a large and growing collection on that subject. The files of Mexican daily newspapers would be of particular interest to such students.

The library plans to issue from time to time bibliographies of special subjects for the purpose of making better known the resources of the library as well as in the hope of making some contribution to the study of the subjects treated.

The library of the Department is not solely limited to anthropological and archaeological books. It also contains volumes on travel, geography, botany, biology, and cartography of Central America. Furthermore, it should be drawn to the attention of the lawyers of New Orleans that they will find quite extensive collections of books relating to the laws and legal matters of Mexico and Central American Republics.

EXPEDITIONS

Expeditions, the reports of which cover from two to five hundred printed pages, can be but summarily treated in a short article. It is intended only to give an idea of the activities of the Department in this direction. In the work of a research institution of this type, exploration may be compared to the essential laboratory investigations of a chemist; without it the material on which theories are built and conclusions based could not be obtained.

Four expeditions have left Tulane University for Middle America to date, the first three being known by number, the fourth entitled the John Geddings Gray Memorial Expedition. Three of these have been primarily archaeological or ethnological, and one agronomical, but, in accordance with the general aims of the Department, each has gathered as much general data as possible. Geographical and geological observations have made it possible to correct or add to the maps of little known sections; trade, communications, products have been observed, and medical notes taken. In more than one case it has been possible to put prospective buyers in remote places in touch with New Orleans firms.



Stucco Figure on Wall of Burial Chamber, Comalcalco, Tabasco.
First Tulane University Expedition.

The First Tulane Expedition, 1925, directed by Mr. Frans Blom, with Mr. Oliver La Farge as assistant, traveled from Vera Cruz, Mexico, through the southern part of the State of Vera Cruz, across the States of Tabasco and Chiapas, thence into Guatemala to the City of Huehuetenango and on to Guatemala City. Of this long journey, 1,200 miles were made on horseback. Some of the road lay through unexplored territory, most of it through country which was, at the best, little known. The report of this expedition, already published (*Tribes and Temples*, Tulane University, 1927,) tells its story and accomplishments in detail. Here one need only point to the mass of achievement and a few special results. Some fifteen hitherto unknown ruins were visited, while important discoveries were made at eight ruins previously known, including the ancient cities of Comalcalco, Palenque, and Tonina. A tomb containing some of the finest stucco bas-reliefs in the new world was discovered at Comalcalco, besides a series of temples hitherto unknown, while our knowledge of Tonina was entirely revolutionized by this Expedition's work. In the study of the living Indians, one hitherto unknown language was recorded, along with material on four others that are little known, enough in one case to write a sketchy grammar. Ethnological studies of the Pajapan and Tzeltal Indians were made. Geographical notes, barometer readings, and road notes provided much needed corrections of existing maps. In certain important locations triangulations were made. Libraries were investigated, and contacts made with business men and local scientific enthusiasts.

In the same year the Second Expedition, consisting of Mr. E. S. Haskell and Mr. A. C. Hartenbower, made a thorough investigation of crops, soil, transportation and labor in the State of Tabasco, Mexico, and adjacent parts of Chiapas. Mr. Haskell's report on the possible development of this district for growing rubber has been included in a Department of Commerce publication. The rest of their findings are now ready for publication. This study was not merely agromonomical, but economical and social as well, and was of the greatest possible use to business men interested in that section.

Acting on a tip received from a friend in Comitán, Mexico, and further hints derived from Indians as a result of it, the Third Tulane Expedition, directed by Mr. Oliver La Farge, with Mr. Douglas S. Byers as assistant, was sent in 1927 to the Cuchumatanes Mountains of Northwestern Guatemala in the hope of finding survivals of the

ancient Maya ritual. They made headquarters in the Indian Village of Jacaltenango, where they had the good fortune to obtain as interpreter and guide a Señor José María Hernández, to whom much of their success is due. They succeeded in winning the confidence of the local medicine men, and eventually, partly through their use of medicine, in being accepted as such themselves. By this means they discovered a really surprising secret continuance of old Maya lore, which sheds much light on archaeological discoveries in other parts of the area. At the same time they made a thorough study of the customs, arts and crafts of the villagers, made racial notes, corrected maps, studied the little known Jacalteca and Chuj languages, and, in the course of a tour through that section, visited four hitherto unknown ruins and made discoveries at two which had been previously reported. At a number of these ruins they found the Indians still worshipping before the ancient temple sites. The report of this expedition has recently been completed for publication.

As the John Geddings Gray Memorial Expedition has but just returned from the field, it would be premature at present to attempt to discuss its results. It was directed by Mr. Frans Blom, assisted by Messrs. Louis Bristow and Webster McBryde, and Señores Ciriaco Aguilar and Gustavo Kanter. Suffice to say that, traversing the Maya Area from Tapachula on the Pacific Coast to Chichén Itzá in Yucatan, it represents a north-south cross section corresponding to the east-west one made by the First Expedition, but through country far less explored and a hundred times more difficult. The mere successful traversing of this territory is a feat hitherto considered impossible. Besides most important archaeological, ethnological, linguistic and medical data, it has made known the geography of vast areas hitherto unexplored.

Before closing even so short a description of the Tulane Expeditions, a word must be said concerning the coöperation of the Mexican and Guatemalan governments and people. The governments of these two countries encourage scientific exploration within their borders, and have given the expeditions every possible help, while of the private citizens, as well as the local authorities, it may be said in general that nowhere in the world can one find finer hospitality or more willing assistance.* Every expedition, on returning to the United States, has

* The Government of Mexico coöperated with the Gray Memorial Expedition by sending Señor Carlos Basauri, Ethnologist, as its representative.

brought with it memories of many acts of friendship, and the most pleasant possible impression of our neighbors to the south of us. In return it has been their earnest endeavor to create as far as possible good feeling toward the United States in general and New Orleans in particular.

RESEARCH WORK

As has already been indicated, the Department in carrying out its object of furthering scientific knowledge of the Middle American countries has sent to Mexico, Guatemala and Honduras several well-equipped and carefully prepared expeditions. Later on excavations for which favorable concessions can be obtained will be undertaken. At first, however, it was thought wise to spend most of the funds in building up an extensive special library, which is the basis for any serious work in this field. The combined Gates, Mackie, Pepper and Schuller collections of books and manuscripts, indeed, form already a library of such value and importance that only a few other special libraries can compete with it. Another great help to scholars is the Index of Maya Inscriptions, prepared by Mr. Blom, which has already been referred to. This contains photographs, drawings and interpretations of all known hieroglyphic texts. This Index has been consulted with advantage by the specialists who stay for a longer or shorter period in New Orleans on their way to Yucatan and Central America. The Library and Index are indispensable for the elaboration of the material gathered by the expeditions in the field. The Manuscript Section contains many unpublished documents, especially on the Indian languages of Mexico and Guatemala, which will furnish to philologists and ethnologists material for years of study.

The creation of a museum of archaeological and ethnographic specimens was thought of secondary importance and little money was spent on acquisitions. Mr. Blom, however, succeeded in bringing together a number of donations and loan collections that as a whole present quite an interesting and instructive museum. Not only the most common types of pottery and implements are shown, but also some first-class pieces of ancient American art.

The treatises and articles elaborated by the members of the Department's staff and by scholars that are or were connected with it, are already quite numerous and cover the different fields investigated by archaeologists, ethnologists and philologists. Only a small part has been published and it is to be hoped that soon a publication fund

may be made available in order that at least the most important scientific contributions may be printed.

A short description of the published and unpublished papers will give an idea of the work accomplished by the different authors.

Mr. Frans Blom, Acting Head of the Department, and Associate in Mayan Archaeology, has several large manuscripts and a number of smaller studies ready for publication.

A well illustrated article from Mr. Blom's pen on one of the most important discoveries made by the First Tulane Expedition in Southern Mexico was published by the Washington Review "Art and Archaeology" (Masterpieces of Maya Art; the Tomb at Comalcalco in the State of Tabasco, Mexico", Art and Archaeology, vol. 24, No. 5, December, 1927). Nine adorned figures, delicately modeled in stucco, are described and explained.

A more technical paper was printed in the April-June number of 1928 of the "American Anthropologist". It treats of "Gaspar Antonio Chi, Interpreter", a Maya Indian of the royal house of Mani, who received a good Spanish education and knew also Aztec, Latin, and of course, his native tongue. Out of dispersed remarks in documents of the XVI century Mr. Blom tries to construct his biography. It is interesting to see that the Maya scholar prepared many answers to the questionnaire sent by King Charles V of Spain to the conquerors of Yucatan.

In the Journal de la Société des Americanistes de Paris will appear a paper entitled: "San Clemente Ruins, Petén, Guatemala (Chichantun)". Mr. Blom treats here a small group of ruins, that is of interest, "as all the main features of the large ruined cities of the Petén District are represented on a small scale."

The International Journal of American Linguistics accepted the following article concerning a Mexican Indian language: "Tentative Bibliography of Zapotec Texts."

The annals of the Geographical and Historical Society of Guatemala published an article, written in Spanish, on a certain structure of Uaxactun, which Mr. Blom proved to be an ancient observatory (El Observatorio más antiguo del Continente Americano)

Of the unpublished manuscripts the most important is undoubtedly the very extensive and painstaking report on Palenque, made by Mr. Blom for the Mexican Government, after having spent three months



Guatemala Indians.
Third Tulane University Expedition.

No 127

in the ruins. It is a veritable monograph on that wonderful place, combining much valuable new data.

A similar manuscript was prepared by Mr. Blom on the ruins of Uaxactun on behalf of the Carnegie Institution of Washington, which sent several expeditions to that ancient site. Many photographs, drawings, maps, and plans illustrate both treatises.

The most important contribution to the archaeology and ethnology of Southern Mexico, made by the Department, is the detailed report of the expedition undertaken in 1925, which fills two bound volumes (*Tribes and Temples*, a record of the Expedition to Middle America conducted by the Tulane University of Louisiana in 1925, New Orleans, Louisiana, 1926 and 1927. 2 volumes, 551 pp.) The text is illustrated by many handsome plates, hundreds of instructive drawings, and several maps. The book has been received with applause by men of science, as well as by the public that craves stories of journeys through untrodden wildernesses. The specialists find exact interpretations of newly discovered monuments, linguistic material of little studied languages and exact measurements of ruined sites, while the average reader enjoys the picturesque description of the country and its people.

To Mr. Blom fell the lot of preparing the archaeological part of the work, involving many difficult decipherings of Mayan dates, while Mr. La Farge treated the material culture and linguistics of the remnants of Indian communities.

Mr. Oliver La Farge, ethnologist of the Department, is responsible for the ethnographic and linguistic part of "*Tribes and Temples*." Quite interesting is the chapter on the Indians of the San Martin Region, in which a definite connection of the Popoloca language with Zoque is shown. The chapter on the Bachajón (Tzeltal) Indian is of value as it gives a detailed account of the material culture and the customs of this Indian tribe.

A well written and vivid account of some aspects of the expedition was given by Mr. La Farge in a popular article in *Scribner's Magazine* ("*Land of Gog and Magog*", *Scribner's*, June, 1926). Especial mention may be made of his fine description of "*Aqua Escondida and Bachajón*", as well as his sarcastic remarks on travel in those regions.

"*The Mighty Choctaw*" is a popular article on this Louisiana Indian Tribe, published in May, 1926, in the *New Orleans Item*. The

Museum of the Department possesses some relics of these aborigines.

In "Adaptations of Christianity among the Jacalteca Indians of Guatemala" (Thought, New York, December, 1927) Mr. La Farge expounds the curious religious ideas of a small Maya community of our day, that represent really a blend of paganism and catholicism.

A fine modern investigation concerning the diffusion of culture is the same author's "Derivation of Apache and Navaho Culture", a manuscript prepared at Harvard University and revised and augmented to 78 typewritten pages at the Department.

The most important contribution made by Mr. La Farge, however, is his report on the Third Tulane Expedition, which he and Mr. Douglas Byers conducted. It will form a good-sized volume with hundreds of plates and drawings and it treats of the modern Indians of Northern Guatemala as well as the antiquities left by their forefathers. With the utmost care and devotion both young scientists have investigated the daily life and the more rare ceremonial practice of the Indians of the Guatemalan town, giving us such a detailed account of all minute things that the book will furnish a most complete treatise of a modern Indian community slightly influenced by the Spanish conquest. In view of the fact that thorough ethnological studies of Mexico and Central American tribes are quite rare, the work of La Farge will be highly appreciated by many students of the Red Race.

The Associate in Maya language, Mr. Ralph L. Roys, has dedicated several years to painstaking investigations of Mayan folk medicine, and the Department has received some six hundred pages of manuscript ready for the printer. Medicinal plants, especially, are treated with great thoroughness, almost all of them being scientifically classified, and their different uses in popular medicine, according to several old sources, are stated in detail. Probably modern pharmaceutics can profit by experimenting with the remedies of old. In any case, the conscientious treatise covers the whole field of Mayan herb medicine to be found in ancient manuscripts and modern tradition.

As auxiliary studies Mr. Roys has elaborated a number of papers whose titles follow: "Local Spanish Names of Plants found in Yucatan", "Maya Plant Names", "Notes on the Chilam Balam de Nah", "Notes on the Sotuta Manuscript", "Notes on Libro del Indio", "Mena Manuscript", "Yerbas y Hechicerias del Yucatan"; data on

Maya plant names supplementing that already acquired, "Tentative alphabetical list of Maya plant names."

Mr. Douglas S. Byers furnished an extensive diary of his part in the Third Tulane University Expedition into Guatemala in 1927, which has been used by Mr. La Farge in composing the detailed report on that scientific enterprise. Mr. Byers shows a keen spirit of observation and will doubtless become an excellent scholar, as he continues his investigation work.

Mr. Hermann Beyer, who spent about fifteen years in Mexico as Inspector of Ancient Monuments and Professor of Mexican Archaeology in the National University of that Republic, came in the autumn of 1927 to New Orleans as Associate of the Department.

He confirmed his preparation of a new and very detailed commentary on the Dresden Codex, the finest Maya manuscript that has come to us. Besides, he is accumulating a vast amount of material for a general treatise on Maya hieroglyphs.

Mr. Beyer had published a study on two Mayan stelae discovered by him in Southern Mexico in the "Memorias de la Sociedad Científica Antonio Alzate", vol. 47, p. 123-143.

An article on "Symbolic Ciphers in the Eyes of Maya Deities" came out in 1928, in the international ethnographic review "Anthropos". It was shown that numbers were used in the eyes of certain Maya gods, but not in order to give them numerical value; the ciphers being only of symbolic significance.

The Revista Mexicana de Estudios Históricos, which had already printed several articles of Mr. Beyer's, published in Spanish an elucidation of the glyph *akbal*. (El Origen del Jeroglífico Maya *Akbal*, Revista, etc., t. II, p. 3-7.)

The same publication has accepted for one of its forthcoming numbers another paper by the same author, on the Maya hieroglyph *Yaxché*.

A study dealing with the fundamental question of Maya hieroglyphic writing is ready for the third volume of "El Mexico Antiguo", a review of which Mr. Beyer published two volumes in Mexico. In particular will be treated the symbolic role of the sign for number one among the Mayas.

For a European literary review he has prepared a detailed criticism of Dr. Krickeberg's book on the mythology and folk tales of the

Aztecs, Mayas, Incas and Muyscas, (W. Krickeberg, Märchen der Aztek und Inkaperuaner, Maya und Muysca).

A treatise on "The Supposed Maya Hieroglyph of the Screech-Owl" will appear in the next issue of the *American Anthropologist*. The whole life-history of a Mayan conventional sign is given, using all available material from the sources.

For the XXIII Session of the International Congress of Americanists, held in September in New York City, Mr. Beyer prepared two papers, one bearing the title: The Infixes in Mayan Hieroglyphs, the other: A Deity Common to Teotihuacan and Totonac Cultures.

Mr. Beyer, well known in scientific circles, has written extensively on the subject he studies, and the Department of Middle American Research considers itself fortunate in having him on its staff.

In 1926 Dr. Rudolf Schuller, famous for his linguistic and ethnographic work in South America and Mexico, spent several months in New Orleans, using the facilities offered by the Department of Middle American Research.

In the archives of the Department is an extensive paper (135 type-written pages) on the Huasteca Indians, prepared by Dr. Schuller in Mexico and partly published in the second volume of "El Mexico Antiguo". (*La Posición Etnologica y Linguistica de los Indios Huasteca de San Luis Potosí. Con una mapa é ilustraciones.*)

Palaeographic transcriptions are represented by the following items: *Arte y Vocabulario de la Lengua Ch'ol*, copia hecha según el manuscrito que existe en la Gates' Colección. Cotejado y corregido por Rudolf Schuller.

Vocabulario de la Lengua Totonaca. Según el manuscrito n. 925 de la Colección Gates perteniente al Middle American Research Department. Copia hecha y después cotejada por Rudolf Schuller.

Doctrina y confesionario en lengua Ixil 1924 Gates Collection No. 1050. With notes by Rudolf Schuller.

For the *International Journal of American Linguistics* Dr. Schuller prepared bibliographical notes on "Two unknown prints of the Ts'ots'il language, a Maya Kiché dialect of Chiapas, Mexico."

In "Collecting Data on Indian Tribes" Schuller expounds his ideas on the mode travelers should employ in making observations on fauna, flora, marriage, birth, death, sky and stars, myths and legends, ethnography, folklore, and statistics.

Furthermore, Schuller wrote notes, mostly Maya-Kiché words, to the appendix II of the Report of the First Tulane Expedition.

The very fine collection of Totonacan pottery, given to the Department by a friend formerly living in Mexico, has been amply treated in an article "Some Observations on Indian Mounds, Idols and Pottery in the Lower Papaloapam Basin, State of Vera Cruz, Mexico". Nineteen figures illustrate the subject matter.

Mr. A. C. Hartenbower, specialist in agricultural questions, wrote a treatise on "The Agronomy of the State of Tabasco", in which he speaks of the present conditions of that Mexican State, indicating how it might be developed and transformed under more efficient methods. Part of the information gathered by Mr. Hartenbower was published by the Department of Commerce in its Trade Promotion Series No. 40, "Possibilities for Para Rubber Production in Northern Tropical America."

There exists in the manuscript collection of the Department a short historical essay by Cristobal Molina, on an Indian revolt in the Mexican State of Chiapas, which has been translated and annotated by Mr. Blom. The exact title is "War of the Casts in its first and second outburst, beginning on the day of the 22nd of December of the year 1867, and continuing until the 31st of October, 1870".

The Department also has on hand awaiting publication the following papers:

"El Partido de Macuspana", a fragmentary manuscript elaborated by the famous Mexican naturalist, José N. Rovirosa. It was intended as a booklet explaining a topographical plan of the region of Macuspana in the State of Tabasco. Also a short paper on "The Indians of Western Venezuela and Eastern Colombia" by Mr. A. E. Getzenbauer, a geologist, who has been traveling in South America.

Of all this material only the report on the first Tulane University Expedition has been published by the University, and it is plain that the Department is much in need of a publication fund so that it may publish not only the manuscripts prepared by its staff, but also some of the many ancient and highly valuable manuscripts which stand on the shelves of its library.

COLLECTIONS

The Department has not attempted to go in for collecting on a large scale. To place itself in a position of competition with the long established museums of Europe and the Americas exhibiting Middle



View of Collections.

Department of Middle American Research, Tulane University of Louisiana.

American material would require an enormous outlay of money which could better be used for research and publication. Its policy has been to accept such specimens as may be made available through the kindness of friends, or through expeditions, for the double purpose of preserving and making available such specimens and of building up a representative collection for study. In this it has been fortunate, having now material on Middle American and related Anthropology, and on the Southeastern United States.

It is not possible in the space available to mention every specimen. Beginning in the extreme south, the principal collections are as follows (Arabic numerals refer to wall and high cases, Roman numerals to table cases):—

NORTHWESTERN SOUTH AMERICA AND SOUTHERN CENTRAL AMERICA

The marked similarities and interplay of influence between these two areas is illustrated by two collections.

The Greenwood Collection, lent by Dr. Hugh A. Greenwood, Tulane '07, through the coöperation of the Cabildo Museum, contains exhibits from Peru, Ecuador, Colombia, Venezuela, and Costa Rica. The archaeological material from Peru and Ecuador is mostly pottery of the Highland Area or the Archaic (pre-Inca) Period, which is of great interest to the student of Middle American culture origins. (Case 3.) There is also a fine group of late Ecuadorean bronze tools and ceremonial adornments, with a number of their stone prototypes which afford an interesting comparison (Case V.) The small group of Colombian pottery is largely from the important Antioquia province.

From Costa Rica, besides a number of polychrome pottery specimens from the Highland Culture, the Greenwood Collection includes a series of pottery vessels and figurines from the ancient Chiriqui semi-civilization, which was transitional between the truly South American and Middle American cultures. The "Armadillo Ware" vases, jars, and pots, although unpainted, are counted as one of the finest ancient pottery crafts of the New World. The fineness of the paste, thinness of the walls, and graceful forms compare with anything in ancient Europe. This ware is particularly well represented, as well as the polychrome "Alligator Ware" which had much influence on the peoples further north. A grinding stone in the form of an animal is a good example of Chiriqui stone-work. With a series of stone figurines from

Costa Rica, it attests the ability of the Central Americans to work refractory igneous rock with stone tools. (Case 4.)

Color is lent to the Eucador material by an ethnological exhibit from the remarkable Jivaro Indians. This still primitive group of tribes, perhaps the most bloodthirsty in the New World, anciently blocked the attempts of the Incas and other civilized peoples to expand eastward into the jungles, as to-day they bar the advance of the Europeans. They have the astonishing custom of skinning the head of a slain enemy, sewing up the skin, and shrinking it to about the size of two fists by a treatment of cooking in hot sand. One of these shrunken heads or *tsantsas*, as well as an unusual *tsantsa* of a sloth, is included in the collection. Ironwood spears, a bow and long arrows, and belts of human hair relate to their warfare and warlike customs. The blow-gun is used only for hunting. Very beautiful adornments of many-colored toucan and parrot-feathers, shell beads and red seeds, with women's long ear-dangles of iridescent beetles' wings form a contrast to the war exhibits. An entire ceremonial costume adorned with rainbow-colored feathers, the gift of an anonymous friend, completes the exhibit. (Case 5.)

The collection made by Dr. William C. Rucker matches the Greenwood. Clay figurines and vessels from Venezuela again attest the close relationship between early Central and South America. Armadillo and Alligator Wares from the Southern Chiriqui of Panama, particularly from Boquete Bajo, make the exhibits of this material truly representative, while there are specimens of other types. A small bowl, a rattle and some figurines of Lost Color Ware represent a very interesting process, rather analogous to batik. After the ground colors, usually red and creamy white, had been laid on, the object was painted with wax in such a manner as to leave exposed areas forming elaborate designs. The whole was then covered with black paint and dipped in boiling water. The wax melted, where it had been the background came through, while on the uncovered areas the design remained in black. This process survives to-day, further north, in the painting of gourds. (Case 4.)

A gold figurine lent by Mrs. George Denegre completes the exhibition of Chiriqui craftsmanship. (Case 4.)

The Highland Culture of Costa Rica and Nicaragua is covered in part by the Greenwood and Rucker Collections, and in part by the collection lent by Mrs. Herbert Palfrey, which shows stone carving,



Marble Vases, Maya. Uloa Valley, Honduras.
S. Zemurray Collection.

Polychrome and Tripod Ware, including three three-legged dishes painted with variants of the double-headed monster pattern. (Case 4.)

The Lenca Culture of Honduras south of the Maya Area has been but little explored. Some Red Ware effigy vessels, belonging to the Louis Carón Collection, are shown in Case 2.

The modern Indians of Central America are represented by some bows and arrows of the Mosquito Indians, a Talamancan blow gun, the gift of A. C. Blocker, and a textile piece from Panama. (Case 2.)

THE MAYA AREA. Although truly civilized peoples flourished to the north of them and in Peru, the highest civilization was probably attained by the ancient Maya Indians, whose cities thrived between the Uloa Valley in Honduras and Comalcalco, Tabasco, from before the birth of Christ until about seven hundred A. D., and then experienced a renaissance from about eleven to fourteen hundred A. D. Most of the Tulane Expeditions have been within this area. As, however, they worked under agreements with the Mexican and Guatemalan governments not to take out any antiquities, our collections are due entirely to the generosity of friends in the United States who already possessed such material.

The Uloa Valley marks the contact between the high Maya Culture and the next cultures to the south. The collection of Mr. S. Zemurray from that region is of prime importance. It includes fine specimens of Mayan jade (Case II), small pottery fragments, figurines modeled in plaster, and two splendid examples of polychrome pottery. (Case I.) One of these last is a typical tripod dish, the hollow legs of which are rattles, of rich color, with a fine, glossy finish. The other is a graceful cylindrical vase painted with grotesque figures, probably representing deities. Copper bells and a gilt copper figurine attest to the trade between the Maya and people of the extreme south of Central America. (Case II.)

Even more remarkable than these, however, are four carved "alabaster" vases, adorned with highly conventionalized serpent motives. The largest has handles worked into the form of the mythological double-headed monster. For shape, design, and perfection of workmanship they compare well with specimens of the same craft from Egypt, Crete, or China. They are shown in Case I, in company with a large three-legged jar of the same material, also from the Uloa Valley. Much simpler, it is distinguished by the grace of its form and the quality of the material. This group of Maya stone vases, taken as a whole, may probably be rated as the finest in the world.

The collection of Mr. Louis Caron, also chiefly from the Uloa Valley, is housed with the Zemurray Collection in Cases 1, I, and II. It includes small pieces of stone, some fine jade, shell, and a wide range of pottery. Part of a fine Maya plate is covered with hieroglyphic writing; probably a dish for royal or priestly use, (Case I.) A well formed vase painted with formalized figures and a border repeating a motive resembling hieroglyphs shows the influence of the Maya upon their neighbors. A very clever piece of work is a high-sided dish so formed that, when looked at from above, it represents the fish *mojara*, common in those waters. (Case I.)

Case III is given over to various minor Maya objects. The first Tulane Expedition discovered a tomb at Comalcalco containing some of the finest stucco bas-reliefs in the Americas. A plaster cast from a paper "squeeze" mold of one of the figures' heads is shown. As the mold suffered considerably in the course of several hundred miles of mule travel, the cast does not do justice to the original. In this case is also a rare example of ancient dentistry, from the ruin of Yoxijá in Chiapas: an upper incisor filed to a point and inlaid with an ornamental disk of iron pyrite. It would be impossible even for a modern dentist to make this inlay to-day without causing decay, yet this and the few other such teeth that have been found are sound.

The modern Maya Indians of Mexico and Guatemala, descendants of the ancient people, preserve in varying degree the customs and arts particularly of the common people of the lost civilization. Through collections made by the First and Third Expeditions, and the gifts of friends, a fairly complete exhibit of their ethnology is being built up.

The Lacandon Indians never were conquered by the Spaniards. Hiding in the jungle, they maintain to this day a purely Mayan, although savage, culture. Their arrows collected by the First Expedition, are still tipped with stone. They are shown with a sample of their weaving and of their tobacco, from the Fourth, Gray Memorial Expedition, in Case 7. In the same case are textiles, a loom, pottery, a blow-gun and other products of the Jacalteca Indians of the Guatemala Highlands. These Indians preserve a remarkable amount of the ancient culture and religion. The Third Expedition, which studied them, was fortunate in obtaining the complete outfit of the First Chief Prayermaker, one of the most important non-Christian priests. (Case 7.)

Cases 9 and 11 are devoted chiefly to the textiles of other Mayan tribes of the Guatemalan Highlands. The sophistication of the designs and fineness of the weaves speak for the ancient culture which lies



Stone Yoke, Totonaca, Mexico.
Loaned by Lewis H. Stanton.

behind this craft. Many designs are reminiscent of those shown on carved monuments of the Old Empire. The color scheme, which is very gay, has probably been greatly enlarged by the introduction of European dyes, and silk is cleverly used. In temporary case 11a, and in Case 11, are shown examples of fine pottery and basketmaking, deposited by Miss Ethel Perkins.

Cases VI and VII contain parallel materials from the Indians of Chiapas, often cruder in workmanship, with much more use of wool, but obviously belonging to the same culture. A jar from Amatenango, Chiapas, in Case VI, is a good example of primitive trade continuing in modern times. It was purchased at Jacaltenango, five days' travel distant. The pottery of this village is traded for even longer distances in all directions.

The Mayan Huasteca Indians, living in Northern Tamaulipas, San Luis Potosí, and adjacent States of Mexico, are far separated from the rest of the stock. Their presence so far north is a riddle, and may some day afford the key to the pre-history of the Mayas. In Case 14, grouped with the truly Mexican material, is an exhibit of their modern products collected by Professor Rudolf Schuller. It includes embroideries, a loom, pottery, and ceremonial paraphernalia such as rattles covered with feathers, decorated sticks for carrying in the hand while dancing, reminiscent of the Southwestern United States, square drums, and flutes.

CENTRAL MEXICO AND THE ISTHMUS OF TEHUANTEPEC. A short distance north of the Maya flourished the little-known Totonac civilization, as yet not surely dated, and very much of a puzzle to archaeologists. The Department is singularly fortunate in the possession of this collection from Tesechoacan, Vera Cruz.

The collection contains a wide range of pottery figurines, masks, heads, and fragments, molded and modelled freehand, of high artistic value. A *genre* head of an old man reminds one irresistibly of Archaic Greek art. With it are shown two fine stone masks lent by Mrs. Elsie McDougall, and a stone "yoke" lent by Mr. Lewis H. Stanton. Both the masks and the yoke show a remarkable ability to carve hard stone elaborately and surely with stone implements. The Totonac yokes are a great puzzle; beautifully carved horseshoe-shaped stones, obviously treated with the care devoted to important objects. No reasonable solution of their purpose has yet been offered. (Case 8.) With this original material are shown some plaster casts of objects in the National Museum of Mexico.

Mr. Lewis H. Stanton presented the Department with a large collection of minor artifacts from Lake Chapala and other sections of Central Mexico. Most worthy of note, for the quality of workmanship shown, are the polished and chipped obsidian ornaments and figurines, three small amulets or ornaments, a dog's head, a monkey's head, and what may be a squirrel in polished stone, and the very finely carved shell. Besides these, the collection contains Archaic, Toltec and Aztec figurines, carved clay spindle whorls and beads, polished and chipped stone, including jade and pseudo-jade beads, and several hundred shell beads. (Case IV).

Through the coöperation of the Mexican Government, a series of casts of objects in the National Museum of Mexico has been obtained. The Totonac exhibits have already been mentioned, the others are Aztec with the exception of one Zapotec funerary urn in the form of a woman. The casts show, in life size or, in the case of very large pieces, reduced, some of the famous examples of Aztec stone carving and clay working. Some of the larger pieces are placed on stands at different points in the Department, the rest are in Case 6.

The First Tulane Expedition, when investigating the border country between the Maya and Totonac, visited the Indians of the Pajapan Region of Southern Vera Cruz, from whom they obtained textiles, bows and arrows (Case 14.). The weapons are interesting because these Indians, having almost forgotten the use of this arm, revived it in recent years for warfare and hunting, on account of the difficulty of obtaining firearms. Although tipped with iron, the arrows as well as the bows are extremely primitive in form.

SOUTHEASTERN UNITED STATES. Visits were made by members of the Department to the Tom Harp Plantation in Morehouse Parish, and, aboard Mr. Sim Weis' yacht, to Arrowhead Beach and Hospital Point near the Rigolets. From these two sites collections were made of arrow and spear-heads and potsherds (Case X.). Mr. Louis F. Hamilton, Tulane '30, presented the Department with a fine collection of arrowheads, potsherds, and beautifully polished stone pieces from Lake Catahoula in Northern Louisiana (Case VIII.). The contrast between the material from the two parts of the state emphasizes its importance as a transition area between two distinct subtypes of the Mound Builder Culture, and leads one to hope that further investigation may be carried on.

With the exception of the material from the Uloa Valley, the C. R. Jones Collection from Alabama is the only archaeological one that

can readily be called completely representative of its district. Covering almost all parts of the state, and very well documented, limitations of space have enabled us to exhibit only about half of it (Cases VIII and X.). Among others, two rare shell plaques, incised and pierced, a copper ornamental spearhead, probably obtained in trade from Lake Superior, and the rim of a large jar from the well-known site of Pintlala may be mentioned as particularly interesting (Case VIII.).

Some complete pots of the pre-historic Mississippi Valley Culture have been deposited by Miss Nina Annesley King (Temporary Case 14a).

The Jones Collection includes a clay pipe of European manufacture and a piece of pottery showing an attempt to model a horse, both presumably dating from the first days of contact with the White Man. French trade goods found by Mr. Eugene Matranger in a mound at Abita Springs bring the story up to about the end of the eighteenth century. (Temporary Case 14a). The last chapter is told in the fine collection of Chitimacha and Choctaw baskets made by the late Mrs. William Preston Johnston, and donated to the Department by Miss Sarah McIlhenny. The fine workmanship of this distinctive basketry, with the deep tone of its dyes, belongs to an art already decadent. It would be impossible or very difficult to duplicate it in the work of the modern remnant of these Indians. (Case 16).

This collection is enriched by the baskets deposited by Mrs. Pearl Jahncke. (Case 16).

SOUTHWESTERN UNITED STATES. From earliest times till the present day, the people of the Southwestern United States and of Middle America have had contacts with and influenced each other. It has been with this in mind that the Department has sought exhibits from that area. The present group is based on the collection of the late Dr. George H. Pepper, archaeologist and ethnologist, which has already been described in some detail in the *Tulane News Bulletin*, November, 1924. The present arrangement is as follows:

Case 13, general material of the Navaho Indians, including a man's blanket of the old style. Case 15, an old-style squaw dress and a jewelry exhibit. Case 17, Navaho weaving exhibit.

Case IX contains the pottery made by Nampeyo, an old woman of Hano, Arizona, now going blind. The ceramics which attest her genius are much sought after. The series of twenty-two pieces shown here is invaluable.

Case 21, pottery of the different Pueblo tribes of the Rio Grande. Case 14, Hopi Indian exhibit, including textiles, a loom, pottery, basketry, and ceremonial costumes. Of the latter, a kilt worn by Snake Priests in the Snake Dance is particularly interesting.

From the point of view of the history of ethnological science, and as examples of high aboriginal art, perhaps the best things in the Pepper Collection are the original drawings of the late Dr. Washington Matthews. An army doctor by profession, Dr. Matthews set himself to study the Indians with whom he came in contact. He first penetrated the secrets of the elaborate Navaho ritual, and in his book "The Night Chant, a Navaho Ceremony," set the standard for future work of this sort. His original drawings of the esoteric "sand paintings" which these Indians make during their ceremonies, are priceless. Any first hand drawing of those paintings is rare, even to-day. Three have been placed on exhibition, two, the Picture of the Wanderers and the Picture of the Fringe Mouths, in Case 15, and the finest, the Picture of the Vision of the Swirling Logs, framed and hung over Case IX, flanked by two of his drawings of dance masks, those of House God and Talking God.

PLAINS AREA. Some very good Plains Indian beadwork, collected by Misses Nina Annesley and Annie King, as well as by Mr. Harry L. Moses, is shown in Case 19, together with catlinite stone pipes and other related material.

The collections and library of the Department of Middle American Research are housed on the top floor of the New Science Building, Tulane University, and open to students and the public week days from 9:00-12:00 A. M. and 1:00-5:00 P. M. (Closed Saturday afternoon and Sunday). By special arrangement (Phone Walnut 2782) it can be open evenings for schools and clubs.

